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Oceans and the law of the sea

General and complete disarmament

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

Environment and sustainable development

International drug control

Letter dated 31 October 2000 from the Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On behalf of the countries of the Pacific Islands Forum represented in New York I have the honour to transmit the communiqué issued by the Heads of State and Government and representatives of the 16 States members of the Pacific Islands Forum at its thirty-first meeting, held at Tarawa from 27 to 30 October 2000 (see annex).*

I should be grateful if you would have the communiqué and its attachments circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 34, 73, 81, 95 and 106.

(*Signed*) Michael **Powles**
Permanent Representative

* The annex is being circulated in the language of submission only.

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Annex to the letter dated 31 October 2000 from the Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

THIRTY-FIRST PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM
Tarawa, Republic of Kiribati
27-30 October 2000

FORUM COMMUNIQUÉ 2000

The Thirty-First Pacific Islands Forum was held in Tarawa, Republic of Kiribati, from 27-30 October 2000 and was attended by Heads of State and Government of Australia, the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, the Fiji Islands, Kiribati, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, the Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu and representatives from Nauru, Papua New Guinea, and Solomon Islands. The Forum Retreat was held at Biketawa Island.

2. The Forum thanked Kiribati for hosting its first meeting in the new millennium and acknowledged with appreciation the warm welcome and generous hospitality provided to all delegations to the Forum and related meetings and for the arrangements made for its meetings.

3. The Forum considered a range of key issues of concern to the region presented through reports of Leaders' and Ministerial Meetings, and the report of the Chairman of the Forum Officials Committee, which met immediately prior to the Forum. Leaders and Ministerial Meetings held in the course of the year included the Pacific Islands Forum-Japan Summit (PALM 2000), Forum Economic Ministers Meeting, Forum Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting, and the Pacific ACP Ministers who visited Fiji and Solomon Islands.The report from the Chairman of the Forum Officials Committee covered several key issues including major political and international issues as well as economic and trade issues.

New Name

4. The Forum met for the first time under its new name, "Pacific Islands Forum" in line with its decision at Palau in 1999 to change its name. Leaders also agreed to adopt the new Agreement Establishing the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat which was signed at Tarawa.

5. Leaders resolved, pursuant to their decision last year to change the name of the South Pacific Forum to Pacific Islands Forum, that on the opening of the new Agreement for signature, the South Pacific Forum shall be known as the Pacific Islands Forum and the South Pacific Forum Secretariat as the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. Leaders also agreed to ratify the Agreement as soon as possible to facilitate an early entry into force of the Agreement.

Regional Security

Fiji and Solomon Islands

6. Leaders warmly welcomed the Solomon Islands' peace agreement reached in Townsville on 15 October. They urged all parties to the conflict to be resolute in their efforts to bring about a comprehensive and lasting peace. Leaders urged the international community, and particularly countries of the region to give the peace process every encouragement, including by contributing generously to Solomon Islands' urgent security, rehabilitation and development needs. Leaders also welcomed the effort and commitment to date by the Fiji Interim Government to return the country to constitutional democracy and looked forward to further progress in these efforts.

Forum Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting (FFAMM)

7. Leaders endorsed the outcomes of the Forum Foreign Affairs Ministers meeting held in Apia, Samoa, from 10-11 August, convened by the Forum Chairman in response to approaches from members for an opportunity to discuss developments in the region's security environment relating to the Fiji and Solomon Islands crises.

8. The Forum expressed grave concern that, since its last meeting in Palau in 1999, the region's security environment had become more unstable. Leaders recognized the urgent need to address some of the fundamental causes of political instability in the region associated with ethnic tensions, socio economic disparity, lack of good governance, land disputes, and erosion of cultural values, all of which required deeper understanding and action.

9. In response to a need for a mechanism for responding to future political and security crises in the region, Leaders adopted the "Biketawa Declaration," at Attachment 1.

10. Leaders also called for the development of long term peace building programmes to address these new security threats, calling on the Commonwealth and the United Nations as well as the region's development partners to contribute to the region's efforts in this regard.

Pacific ACP Mission Report

11. The Forum noted that the Forum Chairman had received a copy of the Pacific ACP Mission Report on Fiji.

Implementation of the Honiara Declaration

12. Leaders noted that, while substantial progress had been made in the implementation of the legislative priorities of the Honiara Declaration, with the majority of members likely to meet the Year 2000 deadline it was unlikely that all members would have enacted all the relevant legislation by the end of the year. Given the need to have the appropriate legislative framework and policies in place to protect members against criminal activities, Leaders called for greater political commitment from all members to fully implement the legislative priorities under the Honiara Declaration as soon as possible.

Drug Issues

13. The Forum expressed its concern over the increase in drug trafficking and in local production of illicit drugs in the region and called on the international community to cooperate with the region, particularly with regional law enforcement agencies and the Secretariat to combat the movement of drugs into the region.

Combined Law Agencies Groups (CLAGs)

14. Leaders, recognising the growing security challenges facing the region, highlighted the need for national law enforcement agencies to work together through CLAGs to better combat criminal activities within member countries.

Regional and Domestic Financial Intelligence Units

15. The Forum recognised the importance of information and intelligence sharing among its members and welcomed the proposal for the establishment of a Project Office within the Forum Secretariat whose main function would be to work on the details of the establishment of a Regional Financial Intelligence Information Sharing Facility as well as assist in the establishment of domestic Financial Intelligence Units within Forum member countries.

Integrity

16. Leaders emphasised the importance of integrity at the workplace and commended the Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) on the development of their integrity self-assessment and action plans. They also encouraged other law enforcement agencies, government departments and regional organizations to adopt the model developed by OCO to suit their own circumstances.

Irian Jaya (West Papua)

17. Forum Leaders expressed deep concern about past and recent violence and loss of life in the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya (West Papua). They called on the Indonesian Government, the sovereign authority, and secessionist groups to resolve their differences peacefully through dialogue and consultation. They also urged all parties to protect and uphold the human rights of all residents of Irian Jaya (West Papua).

18. Leaders would welcome closer dialogue with the Government of Indonesia on issues of common concern.

Economic Issues

Forum Economic Ministers Meeting (FEMM)

19. Leaders endorsed the outcomes of the 2000 Forum Economic Ministers Meeting, held in Niue from 24-25, July and the FEMM review. In particular, the emphasis on supporting a whole-of-government approach, applying rigorous impact assessment, and undertaking consultation in the design and implementation of economic reform was supported. The Forum also reiterated its commitment to the FEMM Eight Principles of Good Governance and pursuit by members of the Forum Economic Action Plan which is intended to improve members' environment for sustained growth.

20. The Forum noted the economic impact analysis of the unrest in Fiji and Solomon Islands, which highlighted the economic and social costs and the collateral impacts for members on trade, transport services and use of

regionally owned infrastructure. It also endorsed the importance of the following additional measures identified by FEMM as having a role in ensuring political and economic stability:

(i) pursuit of economic reform in an effort to provide a sound economic basis upon which social development can be based;
(ii) consulting widely with all stakeholder groups to improve transparency and promote ownership of development;
(iii) assessing and addressing the full range of economic and social impacts of policy proposals to minimise socio-economic disparities;
(iv) progressive implementation of measures to promote good governance, including the Forum Eight Principles of Accountability; and
(v) addressing land issues that remain unresolved.

21. Leaders also commended the outcomes of the First Pacific Regional Conference on Governance for Parliamentarians coordinated by UNDP and the Ministers' decisions in furthering the outcomes of the Conference.

Fisheries Issues

22. Leaders reiterated their determination that the region's tuna resources must be managed on a sustainable basis for future generations. In this regard, Leaders warmly welcomed the adoption in Honolulu on 4th September 2000 of the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific. The Convention will establish a legally binding conservation and management regime to ensure, on a cooperative basis with distant water fishing partners, the maintenance of a sustainable fishery for highly migratory species in the region as well as enhance the economic security of coastal states, particularly those whose economies are highly dependent on this resource. Leaders thanked the United States for having hosted the Multilateral High Level Conference (MHLC) negotiations for a fourth time.

23. Leaders noted that the MHLC negotiations had seen significant compromise by coastal states, and that the Convention represented a balance between their interests and those of their fishing partners. Leaders urged all those with a real interest in the regional fishery to sign the Convention and participate fully in the Preparatory Conference to commence in 2001.

24. Leaders recalled and reaffirmed their agreement at the 1999 Palau Forum that the FFA's Vessel Monitoring System needed to be fully implemented by all FFA members within two years, and welcomed progress during the last year in implementation and compliance. The Forum Fisheries Agency's (FFA) Vessel Monitoring System provides an efficient and cost effective means by which FFA members can conserve and sustainably manage their highly migratory fisheries resources through effective surveillance and enforcement. Leaders further called on all fishing nations to implement the FFA VMS within the next twelve months.

Vulnerability of Islands

25. Leaders welcomed the decision by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to introduce as criteria for Least Developed Countries (LDC) status an economic vulnerability index intended to reflect the economic vulnerability of low-income countries. The Forum also welcomed the decision by the UN Committee for Development Policy at its April 2000 session, following a triennial review of the list of LDCs, not to immediately graduate two of its members, Samoa and Vanuatu, from the list.

26. The Forum noted that the Economic Vulnerability Index adopted by ECOSOC has adequately catered for economic vulnerability, but it does not address environmental vulnerability, a consideration that is critically important for all Forum island member countries.

27. Leaders further commended the work being done by the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) since 1998 on the development of a methodology for determining environmental vulnerability.

Shipment of Radioactive Materials

28. The Forum reiterated its view that shipments of radioactive materials and Mixed Oxide (MOX) fuel through the region posed a continuing concern.

29. The Forum, recalling its 1999 decision, noted the continuation of constructive dialogue between Forum members and government and nuclear industry representatives from France, Japan and the United Kingdom, on a liability regime for compensating the region for economic losses caused to tourism, fisheries and other industries affected as a result of an accident involving a shipment of radioactive materials and MOX fuel even if there is no actual environmental damage caused.

30. The Forum noted that amendments to existing international liability regimes were currently under negotiation and that, once concluded, would take some time to enter into force. It is therefore necessary that discussions focus on intermediate innovative arrangements or assurances to address Forum's concerns.

31. The Forum therefore reaffirmed its desire to continue these discussions with France, Japan and the United Kingdom and called for a high-level commitment from the three shipping states to carry the process forward. Leaders also agreed that the broad range of issues discussed at the second meeting between Forum members and government and nuclear industry representatives from France, Japan and the United Kingdom be further explored at future meetings in early 2001.

Trust Fund for the purposes of cooperation between Japan and Pacific Island Countries

32. The Forum welcomed the offer by Japan to establish a "good will" trust fund for Forum Island Countries with an initial principal of US$10 million proposed to be invested with the interest to be used to finance development projects for Forum Island Countries in the fields of environment, energy and tourism. The principal of the trust fund would be available to cover the costs of the initial response to incidents during shipment of radioactive materials and MOX fuel through the region.

33. The Forum welcomed the goodwill shown by Japan in offering to establish a Pacific Islands Development Cooperation Fund, funded by the Japanese private sector. The Forum endorsed further consultations to finalize the details of the Fund. In doing so Leaders confirmed their understanding that the Fund is quite separate from the issue of compensation and liability that the Forum is currently pursuing with the three nuclear shipping states.

Republic of the Marshall Islands – Radioactive Contamination

34. The Forum recognised the special circumstances pertaining to the continued presence of radioactive contaminants in the Republic of Marshall Islands, and reaffirmed the existence of a special responsibility by the United States towards the people of the Marshall Islands, who had been, and are continuing to be, adversely affected as a direct result of nuclear weapons tests conducted by the United States of America during its administration of the islands under the UN Trusteeship mandate.

35. The Forum again reiterated its call on the United States to live up to its full obligations on the provision of adequate and fair compensation and the commitment to its responsibility for the safe resettlement of displaced populations, including the full and final restoration to economic productivity of all affected areas.

Forum Free Trade Area

36. Leaders recalled their 1999 decision endorsing in principle the creation of a Forum Free Trade Area (FTA) including measures to provide for the application of the arrangements to Australia and New Zealand. It noted the significant progress made in the negotiation of the draft legal text of the Pacific Regional Trade Agreement (PARTA).

Trade Office in the People's Republic of China

37. Leaders welcomed the positive developments in the establishment of a trade office in Beijing with the expectation that the Trade Office will be fully operational by mid-2001. Leaders noted that the Agreement for the establishment of the office will be signed in Kiribati during the Post-Forum Dialogue Meeting with China.

38. Leaders also noted this positive development in the relations between China and the Forum which will serve to strengthen Forum-China ties and in particular, strengthen trading links between the region and China.

ACP-EU Cotonou Agreement

39. Leaders welcomed the signing of the Cotonou Agreement in July 2000 and the admission of the six new Forum members to the ACP Group in July 2000. Leaders expressed their appreciation to the European Union and the ACP Group for the assistance provided to the region and for supporting the accession of six of its members.

40. Leaders noted the strong support and goodwill shown by Forum members in supporting the accession by the six new members from the region.

41. The Secretary General of the Forum Secretariat continue in the role of Regional Authorising Officer and that the Forum Secretariat be duly mandated to coordinate the Pacific Regional Indicative Programme programming exercises for the duration of the Cotonou Agreement.

Information Technology

42. The Forum acknowledged the vital role played by information technology in development and expressed its concern over the high cost of Internet access in the Pacific Islands region. The Forum called for reforms in the communications market to bring lower prices and better services to members.

Environment Issues

SPREP Environment Ministers' Forum

43. Leaders' noted the Guam Environment Ministers' Forum Statement at Attachment 2. In noting this report and with reference to the issue of a South Pacific Whale Sanctuary, the Forum noted the recommendation of the SPREP Ministerial meeting calling for full support for the South Pacific Whale Sanctuary proposal which was to be presented at the annual meeting of the International Whaling Commission in 2001. The SPREP Ministers recognised that the proposal would not only protect the breeding grounds of the great whale species in the Southern Hemisphere but would also bring economic benefit to some members through the establishment of whale watching
enterprises in their territorial waters through which the great whales passed in the course of their migrations.

44. Leaders recalled their support in 1993 for the International Whaling Commission's moratorium on commercial whaling and a proposal to establish a Southern Ocean Sanctuary. They also recalled their support in 1998 for the development of a proposal to establish a South Pacific Whale Sanctuary for great whales to complement the existing Indian and Southern Ocean sanctuaries and looked forward to progressing a proposal. In this regard, the Forum noted with gratitude New Zealand's offer to convene and provide financial support towards a Forum regional workshop to progress a proposal to establish a South Pacific Whale Sanctuary.

45. Leaders welcomed the adoption of the new Action Plan for Managing the Environment in the Pacific Islands Region (2001-2004) and the Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change, Climate Variability and Sea Level Rise.

Climate Change and Sea Level Rise

46. The Forum reiterated that the issues of climate change, climate variability, sea level rise and environment protection continue to be of major concern to the Forum region.

47. Leaders further reiterated their deep concerns about the adverse impact of human-induced climate change, natural climate variability and sea level rise on all Pacific Islands, especially low-lying atolls. Leaders also recognized the importance of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol which provided a significant first step forward on the path of ensuring effective global action to combat climate change.

48. The Forum highlighted the importance of the early entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol, preferably by 2002, and that its implementation will result in real and measurable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

49. Leaders also called for all countries to make every effort to work towards the resolution of all outstanding negotiating issues at the Sixth Conference of the Parties (COP6) in The Hague, Netherlands, and encouraged all members to participate and to contribute to advancing the negotiations.

South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty

50. The Forum noted that there had been no further signatures or ratifications of the Rarotonga Treaty since 1997 and reiterated its calls on the United States to promptly ratify the Protocols to the Treaty.

Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

51. The Forum, in pursuit of genuine and universal nuclear disarmament, further urged its members, its development partners and all those other countries, particularly Annex 2 countries, which have not done so, to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

52. The Forum encouraged those of its members who have been chosen to host monitoring stations under the International Monitoring System of the global verification regime provided for under the CTBT, to expedite completion of national arrangements required for setting up the stations as soon as practicable.

53. Leaders called for active pursuit by the Nuclear Weapon States of the steps agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference leading to nuclear disarmament. They welcomed the Conference's identification of measures to maintain and further strengthen the international nuclear non-proliferation regime.

External Relations

Pacific Islands Forum/Japan Summit – PALM 2000

54. The Forum Leaders expressed their appreciation to the Government and people of Japan for the successful Pacific Islands Forum/Japan Summit (PALM 2000) held in Miyazaki, Japan on 22 April 2000. The Summit led to a deeper understanding between the Forum and Japan and resulted in concrete initiatives for enhancing the partnership between the two sides. The Forum noted that a number of those initiatives are being implemented

and looks forward to further joint efforts in the near future. In this regard, the Forum welcomed the creation of the new Japan Forum Partnership Programme funding facility. The Forum also expressed its desire to continue this high
level meeting with Japan with a third Japan Pacific Islands Forum Summit in the near future.

Relations with the Commonwealth and the United Nations

55. Leaders agreed to invite the Commonwealth and the UN Secretaries General to attend the opening session of the 2001 Forum and directed the Forum Secretariat to develop proposals for Leaders' consideration in 2001, for a closer and more co-operative relationship between the Forum, the Commonwealth and the United Nations.

56. In order to advance the Forum's foreign policy objectives at international fora, Leaders agreed to explore the creation of a separate regional group of Pacific states within the United Nations.

57. Leaders also agreed to work together as a regional caucus group at all international meetings.

Post-Forum Dialogue Issues

58. The Forum reiterated the importance it accords to the Post-Forum Dialogue meetings, which is the highest level forum for multilateral consultations with all major Partners to the region. Leaders agreed to strengthen the Post-Forum Dialogue Meetings to ensure enhanced benefits from these meetings for both members and Partners and that this be discussed with Partners at the twelfth Post-Forum Dialogue meetings in Tarawa so that new arrangements can be put in place for the 2001 meetings.

Other Matters

Small Island States

59. The Leaders noted the decisions of Small Island States Meeting as summarised in its report at Attachment 3.

Announcements

60. The Leaders welcomed Australia's announcement that it would extend the life of the Pacific Patrol Boat Programme for another twenty-five years. Leaders also welcomed an offer by Australia to host a workshop for Forum Island Countries on the practical requirements, implementation and enforcement of national weapons control legislation. The Forum also welcomed a report from Australia on further progress on East Timor since it last met in Palau last year. The offer by Australia to sponsor and organise a para-Olympics group for the Pacific region was gratefully acknowledged as well.

2000 Olympics

61. The Forum acknowledged with gratitude the arrangements by Australia in bringing the Olympic Torch to the Pacific Islands and congratulated Australia for a very successful Olympic Games.

Appreciation

62. The Forum commended the outgoing Chairman, HE Mr Kuniwo Nakamura, President of the Republic of Palau, and his Government for his leadership of the Forum over the past year.

Re-appointment of the Secretary General

63. The Secretary General, Mr W Noel Levi, CBE was re-appointed for a second term in office.

Attachment 1

"BIKETAWA" DECLARATION

Forum Leaders recalled their 1995 Vision Statement, the Forum Economic Action Plan Eight Principles of Good Governance and the 1997 Aitutaki Declaration. With the aim of elaborating upon these earlier statements and in the interests of regional cooperation, Forum Leaders while respecting the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of another member state committed themselves and their countries to a number of guiding principles and courses of actions:

(i) Commitment to good governance which is the exercise of authority (leadership) and interactions in a manner

that is open, transparent, accountable, participatory, consultative and decisive but fair and equitable.

(ii) Belief in the liberty of the individual under the law, in equal rights for all citizens regardless of gender, race, colour, creed or political belief and in the individual's inalienable right to participate by means of free and democratic political process in framing the society in which he or she lives.

(iii) Upholding democratic processes and institutions which reflect national and local circumstances, including the peaceful transfer of power, the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary, just and honest government.

(iv) Recognising the importance and urgency of equitable economic, social and cultural development to satisfy the basic needs and aspirations of the peoples of the Forum.

(v) Recognising the importance of respecting and protecting indigenous rights and cultural values, traditions and customs.

(vi) Recognising the vulnerability of member countries to threats to their security, broadly defined, and the importance of cooperation among members in dealing with such threats when they arise.

(vii) Recognising the importance of averting the causes of conflict and of reducing, containing and resolving all conflicts by peaceful means including by customary practices.

2. Forum Leaders recognised the need in time of crisis or in response to members' request for assistance, for action to be taken on the basis of all members of the Forum being part of the Pacific Islands extended family. The Forum must constructively address difficult and sensitive issues including underlying causes of tensions and conflict (ethnic tension, socio-economic disparities, and lack of good governance, land disputes and erosion of cultural values). To this end, the Secretary General in the future after consulting the Forum Chairman should urgently initiate the following process:

(i) Assess the situation, make a judgment as to the significance of the developments and consult the Forum Chair and such other Forum Leaders as may be feasible to secure approval to initiate further action;

(ii) Consult the national authorities concerned regarding assistance available from the Forum; and

(iii) Advise and consult with the Forum Foreign Ministers, and based on these consultations, undertake one or a combination of the following actions to assist in the resolution of the crisis:

(a) A statement representing the view of members on the situation;
(b) Creation of a Ministerial Action Group;
(c) A fact finding or similar mission;
(d) Convening an eminent persons group;
(e) Third party mediation;
(f) Support for appropriate institutions or mechanisms that would assist a resolution; and
(g) The convening of a special high level meeting of the Forum Regional Security Committee or an ad hoc meeting of Forum Ministers.

(iv) If after actions taken under (iii) the crisis persists, convene a special meeting of Forum Leaders to consider other options including if necessary targeted measures.

3 Any regional response to a crisis should take account of the guidelines set out in Annex A.

Biketawa, Kiribati
28 October 2000

Annex A to Attachment 1

(i) Actions are discussed with the authorities in the country concerned;

(ii) The Forum and persons involved on behalf of the Forum should have credibility i.e. must be seen as honest and impartial brokers who are genuinely interested in bringing about a fair resolution;

(iii) There must be coherence and consistency in the strategy followed;

(iv) There must be continuity and conclusion of the process i.e. staying the course;

(v) There must be cooperation with other key international and regional organisations and national actors and coordination of all these efforts;

(vi) There must be a sufficient degree of consensus on the resolutions by those who have to implement them i.e. local players and supporters and those that support them (i.e. outside organisations and governments); and

(vii) The intervention must be cost-effective.

Attachment 2

South Pacific Regional Environment Programme(SPREP) Eleventh SPREP Meeting – Environment Ministers Forum
Guam
13 October, 2000

The Guam Environment Ministers' Forum Statement

Ministers of Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, the Federated States of Micronesia, French Polynesia, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga, and Tuvalu, along with representatives of American Samoa, France, Guam, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, the Northern Mariana Islands, the United States of America, and Wallis and Futuna, meeting in Guam, 13 October 2000, on the occasion of the 11th SPREP Meeting:

Expressing their appreciation to the Governor, Government (especially the Guam Environmental Protection Agency) and people of Guam for their generous hospitality in hosting the 11th SPREP Meeting including the Ministerial Forum;

Recalling the Ministerial Statement from the Roundtable of Pacific Ministers on Sustainable Development (Auckland, 1998), the Ministerial Statement on Environment and Development, (Nuku'alofa, 1996), and the Forum Communiqué (1993) stating all development in the region "must be both economically and ecologically sound";

Recalling also the outcomes of the Asia/Pacific Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development held at Kitakyushu, Japan in August 2000;

Welcoming progress made within the SPREP Region in the implementation of the Action Plan for Managing the Environment of the South Pacific (1997-2000);

Further recalling with pleasure the recognition of the special case for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) as detailed in the Barbados Programme of Action and the outcomes of the United Nations Special Session on SIDS;

Recognising the significant challenges that remain at national, regional and international levels to mobilise the essential commitment and financial resources required to promote sustainable development consistent with sound environmental protection measures that are to be addressed through the Action Plan for Managing the Environment of the Pacific Islands Region (2001-2004);

Reaffirm their commitment to environmental protection for sustainable development;

Adopt the Action Plan for Managing the Environment of the Pacific Islands Region (2001-2004) that will assist people of the Pacific islands to be better able to plan, protect, manage and use their environment for sustainable development by focusing on pollution and waste management, biodiversity conservation, climate change and variability, and economic development;

Stress that the development and strengthening of institutional capacity, human resources, communications and information systems will be essential to the implementation of the Action Plan;

Agree to put in place or strengthen arrangements at the national level to implement the Action Plan (2001-2004), including support for national focal points, the mainstreaming of environment within national policies and programmes, the further strengthening of partnerships with NGOs and the private sector; and a national consultative process that will link the development of regional programmes to national priorities;

Request that the SPREP Secretariat pay particular attention to the establishment of baselines for monitoring and reporting environmental performance and to the implementation of the Action Plan;

Highlight the importance of effective management and conservation of coastal and oceanic resources to the environment and livelihoods of Pacific Island people, and in this regard, welcome the successful conclusion of the Convention for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Central and Western Pacific and other global fisheries arrangements and call upon members to become Parties to these instruments, look forward to the implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for International Waters and support the

development of a Regional Ocean Policy;

Welcome the efforts to establish a South Pacific Whale Sanctuary through the International Whaling Commission and agree to continue to support efforts to promote the adoption of a Sanctuary, whale conservation and associated eco-tourism development;

Highlight the urgent need to improve the management and disposal of solid and hazardous wastes in island countries throughout the region;

Agree to strengthen the SPREP Secretariat, to focus on its advisory and programme development capacity;

Call on traditional development partners and the international community to provide further support for the implementation of the Action Plan (2001-2004), including the Regional Trust Fund for Nature Conservation currently being established;

Call on the SPREP Secretariat to develop, with CROP partners, a collaborative framework for mainstreaming environmental protection within the region's development agenda;

Reaffirm the Apia and SPREP Conventions as the foundation for a regional legal framework addressing environmental issues and agree to revitalise these instruments;

Urge Members not yet Parties to the Apia and SPREP Conventions to accede or adopt these Conventions as soon as possible;

Recall the importance of the Waigani Convention and strongly urge member countries to become Parties to the Convention enabling its entry into force at the earliest;

Further encourage member countries to seriously consider becoming Parties to the Basel Convention as soon as possible;

Highlight the importance of effective participation by Pacific Island governments in key international conventions and agreements, including the Global Environment Ministers Forum;

Call on the international community to support Pacific efforts to participate in these international negotiations, in particular the Global Environment Ministers Forum, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biodiversity and Rio +10;

Reiterate their deep concerns about the adverse impact of human-induced climate change, natural climate variability and sea level rise on all Pacific Islands, especially low-lying atolls;

Recognise the importance of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol, which provide first steps towards effective global actions to combat climate change;

Encourage all countries to make every effort to work towards resolution of all outstanding negotiating issues at the Sixth Conference of the Parties (COP6) in The Hague and thereby ensure the environmental integrity of the Kyoto Protocol and that its implementation will result in real and measurable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and the early entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol, preferably by 2002;

Endorse the Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change, Climate Variability and Sea Level Rise, and roundtable process, as a comprehensive means of catalyzing action and strengthening partnerships at all levels to address these important issues and call for its immediate implementation;

Recognise that Rio +10 presents a significant opportunity for the international community to re-invigorate the sustainable development agenda at all levels;

Call on the SPREP Secretariat and the international community to assist them prepare for and participate in the 2002 Summit;

Agree to meet as Ministers on a biennial basis and preferably to convene the meeting in 2002 before Rio+10 at a time and venue to be determined by the next SPREP Meeting;

Agree to transmit this Statement through the Government of Kiribati to the next Pacific Islands Forum, Kiribati.

Attachment 3

NINTH SMALLER ISLAND STATES SUMMIT
Tarawa, Kiribati
27 October 2000

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

Leaders and representatives of the Forum's Smaller Island States (SIS), comprising the Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Republic of Marshall Islands and Tuvalu, met on 27 October 2000 in Tarawa, Kiribati. The meeting was chaired by the President of Kiribati.

Airline Services

2. The SIS Summit progressed discussion on improving coordination of air services. Leaders noted a report on Air Pacific, and in particular that Air Pacific became a public company in 1998, in which Fiji has a majority ownership with Qantas Airways as a major partner, while two SIS (Nauru and Kiribati), among other Forum island countries, retained a small interest. Air Pacific's reliance on long haul tourists was noted. Leaders agreed that the SIS have significant potential for tourism but this was restricted by airline schedules.

3. The Summit agreed that developing better air services, including frequency and reliability is a key to the establishment of a firm economic foundation and acknowledged that economic factors meant a continuing reliance on Fiji and others as hubs for regional flights on smaller aircraft. It was also noted that the Central Pacific members of the SIS were taking some action amongst themselves to overcome the problems related to air services.

Issues for Forum

4. The SIS Leaders considered the letter from the FOC Chair to Forum Leaders with a view to identifying particular impacts on the SIS and, as appropriate, agreeing to advocate their interest at the Forum. Except as noted below the Summit agreed that it supported all the recommendations made in the letter.

Climate Change

5. The meeting heard a verbal report from the Director of SPREP on the developments relating to the Kyoto Protocol since the last Forum. It was noted that fifty-five signatories, accounting for 55% of green-house gas emissions between them, were required to bring the Kyoto Protocol into force. However, to date only nineteen countries, most of whom were AOSIS members and seven of whom were Pacific island countries, had ratified their signatures. It was further noted that no Annex 1 countrys had ratified the Kyoto Protocol, though there were positive signs from New Zealand and the European Union members that they were ready to sign the Protocol.

6. The SIS Summit noted that this is an important issue and a matter of survival for the island countries. They recalled the Alliance of Small Islands States (AOSIS) proposal that the target for the reduction of emission of greenhouse gasses should be 20%. The meeting agreed with the stand of the AOSIS on the issue and agreed to advocate that position at the Forum meeting.

7. The Summit noted that all SIS countries have ratified the Kyoto Protocol but expressed concern at the lack of progress on ratification by industrial countries, and that these should now pay urgent attention to the matter.

Fisheries

8. In respect of the selection of a location for the Fisheries Commission for the Convention for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific it was suggested that, in the absence of any consensus, the Pacific Way for selecting a headquarters might be to pick the smallest state that had put in a bid, but agreed that this was a matter for Leaders to decide.

Information Technology

9. The SIS recognised the vital role played by information technology in promoting improved trade, tourism and education and expressed concern at the prohibitive costs of Internet service in the region.

Other Matters

10. The SIS Summit noted that this is the last meeting that Mr Esekia Solofa would attend as Vice Chancellor of the University of the South Pacific and acknowledged his services to the region and his assistance to the SIS.

11. The meeting welcomed Ms Lou Pangelinan as the Director General of the Pacific Community, observing that SIS Leaders were proud to have for the first time a lady of the Pacific Islands as the head of a Pacific regional organisation. Leaders also welcomed Mr Lisiate Akolo, newly appointed Chief Executive of the South Pacific Tourism Organisation, and urged him to provide a special focus on tourism for the SIS.

12. The SIS Leaders agreed they would meet again before the next Forum.